

An Archangel's Theology Raphael's Speaking about God and the Concept of God in the Book of Tobit

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The statements the angel Raphael makes on God¹ are tied up in the entire book of Tobit and, even if they give a special emphasis, they are part of the entire message about God's acting. That is why the reflections below will be made by the following steps: After settling some important preliminary problems (1.) we will deal with the following subjects: God's names / designations and epithets (2.1.) and God's characteristics (2.2.), God's ways of acting (2.3.), ways of acting before God (2.4.), and finally Raphael's speaking about God in the context of the theological concept in the book of Tobit (3.)².

1. General Preliminary Problems

Whoever wants to put forward instances of usage, will inevitably come across the problem of textual tradition. The Aramaic fragments discovered in Qumran (4Q196.197.198.199) and the Hebrew fragment (4Q200) are the earliest evidence dated to the 1st century BC. Although textual remains – up to 42% of the Aramaic and about 13% of the Hebrew versions – have been discovered, less than 20% of the text are in hand when you have recourse to these fragments. – Tobit has been completely preserved in Greek; there are two significant, though differing versions: the longer and probably earlier one³ found in the Codex Sinaiticus⁴

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- 1 Passages in the Old Testament are considered in the light of the LXX, Hebrew words and references – if any – only in the second place. English translation as a rule according to the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) 1989.
 - 2 To my surprise there is so far no detailed investigation into the theological concepts of GII or GI; there are even fewer studies comparing the theological concepts of GII and GI. Therefore the research preparing the present study was informative; the subject, however, cannot be treated entirely here.
 - 3 Cf. Hanhart, Text 27-39; Rabenau, Studien 6-7; Fitzmyer, Tobit VI-VII.
 - 4 In this version 4:7-18 and 13:6-10 are missing.

(GII), and GI⁵ the shorter recension which is more often referred to and forms the basis of the old translations⁶ – excepting Vetus Latina.

1.1. Occurrences of κύριος and θεός

In 26 (GII⁷) viz. 21 (GI⁸) verses in the book of Tobit we find God's name κύριος and in 37 (GII⁹) viz. 35 (GI¹⁰) verses it is θεός – the number is still bigger because in some verses the words occur more than once. The usage of God's names in GII and GI comparatively often differ from one another in one and the same passage. We just refer to δεσπότης in passing.

Most passages use *either* κύριος *or* θεός, in some passages¹¹ they are combined with each other. Always κύριος takes the first position, θεός follows either as a genitive object or as an apposition.

In 13:4 God's names appear in parallelism¹². The God invoked in 13:1 (θεός) is interpreted in 13:4 as αὐτὸς ἡμῶν κύριος, αὐτὸς θεός ἡμῶν, αὐτὸς πατὴρ ἡμῶν and αὐτὸς θεὸς εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας. – This suggests that there are variants of emphasis, but no differences that would exclude one another.

1.2. The Protagonists and the Literary Frame

Several personages are the protagonists within this story of a family: the main character Tobit, his wife Hanna and their son Tobias, in distant Rages their future daughter-in-law Sara and her parents Raguel and Edna. As a companion sent by God the angel Raphael appears. – Direct speech is prevailing. Excepting only a few instances¹³, God's names

5 The so called version GIII, which is attested in the minuscules 106.107 [44.125.610] will not be taken into account.

6 Codex Vaticanus, Codex Alexandrinus, the Syriac, Sahidic, Ethiopian, Armenian and Vulgata-translations are to be mentioned.

7 Cf. 2:12ff; 3:2f,6,10,15; 4:5,19,21; 5:20; 6:18; 7:11f,17; 8:4; 9:6; 10:11,13f; 12:12,15,20; 13:4,7,15f; 14:15; 1 Ma. 2:53; 8:30; 9:25.

8 Cf. 1. 2:2,12ff; 3:2,11f,14; 4:5,19; 5:20; 7:17; 8:4,7; 10:13; 12:22; 13:4,7,11,13,15; 14:2,6f.

9 Cf. 1:4,12; 3:11,16f; 4:21; 5:4,10,17; 7:13; 8:5,15; 9:6; 11:14ff; 12:6f,11,14,17f,20,22; 13:2,4,18; 14:2,4-8,10,15.

10 Cf. 1:12; 3:11; 4:5,7,14,19,21; 5:17; 6:18; 7:12; 8:5,15; 10:11,14; 11:14,16f; 12:6f,11,14,17f,20,22; 13:2,4,9,13,16,18; 14:2,4ff.

11 Cf. in GI 3:11; 4:5; 13:13; 14:2,6,7.

12 The sentences in 12:22 which follow one another, but say different things, cannot be seen as parallel with regard to the usage of the names of God.

13 Cf. 10:14; 11:16; 12:22; 14:2, that is 4 occurrences.

occur in speeches and prayers. You find κύριος in the words of Tobit¹⁴, Tobias¹⁵, Edna¹⁶, Sara (3:14) and Hanna (5:20). Tobit¹⁷, Raguel¹⁸, Raphael¹⁹ as well as Tobias (8:5) and Sara (3:11) talk about θεός. – In GI Raguel and especially Raphael never talk about κύριος, whereas Hanna and Edna never mention θεός in this tradition.

If one arranges the occurrences of θεός according to their frequency, Tobit (25 times) and Raphael (10 times) hold the top position; Tobias (once), Sara (once) and Raguel (thrice) use it five times altogether.

2. Theology in the Book of Tobit

In the book of Tobit God's names "Lord" and "God" balance one another. It is a question whether θεός and κύριος are (abstract) designations or names? – Without going to answer this question right now, we mention the problem once again which results from the frequent difference of "Lord" and "God" between GII and GI.

2.1. God's Names and Epithets

In the following we will focus on *king*²⁰ and *father*. The book of Tobit is part of the late Biblical Greek tradition. That is why our presentation of the most significant themes will throughout refer to this setting.

2.1.1. Lord / God and King in the LXX Tradition

The combination of *God's names* and *king* is found several times in LXX. In this combination κύριος²¹ is used more often than θεός²². Even though

14 Cf. 2:2; 3:2,11; 4:5,19; 13:4,7,11,13,15; 14:6,7, that is 12 occurrences.

15 Cf. 8:4,7, that is 2 occurrences.

16 Cf. 7:17; 10:13 (twice), altogether 3 occurrences.

17 Cf. 1:12; 4:5,7,14,19,21; 5:17; 11:14,16,17; 13:2,4,9,13,16,18; 14:2,4,5(twice),6(twice),7(twice), that is 25 occurrences.

18 Cf. 7:12; 8:15; 10:11, altogether thrice.

19 Cf. 6:18; 12:6 (thrice),7,11,14,17,18,20, that is 10 occurrences.

20 Cf. Skemp, Adelphos.

21 Cf. 2Macc 1:24; 3:35; Isa 6:1,5; 33:22; 41:21; 43:15; Jer 28:57; Zech 14:16f; Ps 5:3; 23:8,10; 28:10; 46:3; 83:4; 94:3; 97:6; Sir 51:1; and besides 3Macc 2:2; 5:35; Odes 14:10; PsS 2:32; 5:19; 17:1,34,46.

22 Cf. 1Sam 12:12 ambiguous; Esth 4:17[6]; Jdt 9:12; 2Macc 1:24; 6:2; Ps 5:3; 43:5; 46:7f; 67:25; 73:12; 83:4; 144:1.

the motif of YHWH's kingship is old, the greater part of its textual occurrences is late. This is due to the historical background. By opposing "Lord" versus "king" one touches basic issues of social and religious origin in the late period of the Old Testament. The profane ruler, βασιλεύς, is often addressed as κύριος and also understood himself as *lord*²³.

The general use of the form of addressing the ruler found expression in the book of Judit: the king (ὁ βασιλεύς) is at the same time the lord of the universe (ὁ κύριος πάσης τῆς γῆς; Jdt 6,4; cf. 2,5; 11,4). *Nebuchadnezzar* is mentioned – he is a cipher meaning the Seleucid kings. This usage is also found in the translation of the Hebrew book of Esther: 6:1^{LXX}; cf. 4:8; 10:3. The Greek gradually developed extensions of the text, found in the additional material, have a Seleucid background. But there usage has been changed, since *lord* and *king* are no longer parallel, but instead contrasting elements are intended. Esth 10:3c²⁴ opposes King Ahasuerus/Ἀρταξέρξης to the LORD (κύριος; Esth 10:3f.) who is explicitly identified as θεός (Esth 10:3f). In the meantime "lord" has come to designate the only "king" understood as God in the Bible as he is testified to in the invocations in prayer: "Lord, God, King, God of Abraham / κύριε ὁ θεὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ θεὸς Ἀβρααμ"; Esth 4:17-18, and Esth 4:17b: Lord, lord, king ruling everything κύριε κύριε βασιλεὺ πάντων κρατῶν. In these passages κύριος and βασιλεύς describe the powerful position on the one hand, and the divinity (θεός) on the other.

2.1.2. God as King in Tobit

Tobit participates in the theological concept described above; it is remarkable, however, that there are significant differences between GII and GI.

2.1.2.1. The "theo-"logicalization in GI (Tob 10:14)

Tob 10:14 says that Tobias returns home after he has accomplished the purpose of his journey: "Tobias parted from Raguel with happiness and joy, praising (εὐλογῶν) the Lord (τῷ κυρίῳ) of heaven and earth (τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς), King (τῷ βασιλεῖ) over the universe (τῶν πάντων)²⁵, because he had made his journey a success." So according to GII Tobias

23 Cf., even if rarely used, the term δεσπότης for God; cf. GII: 3:14; 8:17; GI: 8:17.

24 Numeration according to Rahlfs, Septuaginta.

25 NRSV formulates the point not clearly enough: "The Lord of heaven and earth, King over all."

praises and thanks the *lord* (τῷ κυρίῳ) of heaven and earth. The focus on power is intensified by the parallel “king” (βασιλεύς). – GI only resumes the first part of the parallelism: “After this Tobias departed praising (εὐλογῶν) God (τὸν θεόν).” – GI accentuates the theological level: Tobias thanks God (τὸν θεόν). The hint at creation (heaven and earth) is left out as well as the one at the *king of the universe*. It is an abstract, theological statement that remains.

2.1.2.2. Lord and King (Tob 13:7)

The praising song in Tob 13:1-14:1 has a bi-partite structure: 13:1-8 and 13:9-18; 14:1. The first stanza brings God into focus. Two reasons are given why he is praiseworthy and commendable: He punishes evil-doing, and rewards the good. This applies to the individual, this applies to the entire people, too. This section is concluded in 13:7-8 by a fluid transition to the praise of Jerusalem which is the subject in 13:9-14:1. Tob 13:7 has the function of a joint. Considering the numerous differences between GII and GI the unanimous statement in Tob 13:7 is striking. This indicates that GI is sharing the position of GII which makes this verse extremely interesting for us:

“So now (νῦν – nur GII) see what he has done (ἐποίησεν) for you (μεθ’ ὑμῶν); acknowledge (ἐξομολογήσαθε) him at the top of your voice. Bless (εὐλογήσατε) the Lord of righteousness (τὸν κύριον τῆς δικαιοσύνης), and exalt (ὑψώσατε) the King of the ages (τὸν βασιλέα τῶν αἰώνων).”

When one reconsiders (θεάσασθε) one’s own historical experience one will find how God acts: He reacts to apostasy and for that reason he disperses the people. After their conversion he again gathers his people (Tob 13:5-6). Thus it is actually – and not theoretically – experiencing God which makes one learn ἃ ἐποίησεν μεθ’ ὑμῶν. Favourable as well as unfavourable (the latter is not easily understood by modern readers) experiences encourage to praise God.

The word-pair κύριος τῆς δικαιοσύνης and βασιλεύς τῶν αἰώνων emphasizes the power and the authority. μεγαλωσύνη / great, powerful majesty in 13:4 had prepared this theme. The κύριος here addressed is provided with “righteousness”. “Righteousness” is a central aspect in Israelite, Egyptian and Greek conceptions of the world, though in different ways respectively. If Israel’s god is the lord of righteousness, this means that no other “lord” defines this central value.

This *lord* is no transient appearance which will disappear from the scene very soon. He is the *king* of all aeons, as the ambiguous genetive

form²⁶ τῶν αἰώνων shows. Had the authors only been interested in referring to a long period of time, they would have chosen the frequently used and “clear” phrase εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα / *forever*. But here more is at stake: Whether the English translation *ages* (NRSV) appropriately expresses the ambiguity remains to be seen. As the history of Israel and other nations illustrates, there are prosperous and disastrous periods. In addition the duration of men is transparent and controllable neither in the past nor in the future. As the actual *lord* the κύριος rules and controls all phases of the history of every nation. With the same phrase 13:11 (only found in GI) repeats this idea and emphasizes it by this second quotation.

2.1.2.3. King of Heaven

In Tobit creation (cf. κτίσις in 8:5) is referred to just in passing; nevertheless, central elements of the concept – as the *heaven* – are mentioned several times. God as god (ὁ θεός; 7:13; 8:15) or lord (ὁ κύριος; 7:17) of heaven – as he is residing there (5:17), looks down protectively on men (6:18; 7:12; 10:11), accompanies them when they travel, and thus he will guide Tobias when he returns to his relatives (7:17; 10:13), and he may give joy as a present in general. In 7:12 (GII) οὐρανός is a paraphrase for God. Therefore, it is understandable that “God” and “king of heaven” are a parallelism in exalted praise: “I exalt my God (θεόν μου), and my soul rejoices in the King of heaven (τὸν βασιλέα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ)” (13:9).

In 13:3 the author adopts the aspect of an accompanied wandering as a pilgrimage of the nations (ἔθνη πολλά). Where do the nations go? They want – according to GII – to dwell close to the holy name (τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ἅγιόν σου); neither *God* nor *lord* are mentioned explicitly here. At the same time they bring gifts for the *king of heaven* (τῷ βασιλεῖ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ).

In the book of Tobit the “*name*” – God’s name is meant – is a cipher of God, and therefore it is set in parallel with κύριος / θεός nearly throughout. Adjectives viz. verbal adjectives, verbs and temporal duration are attributed to the name; they are also attributed to God; cf. “holy” (ἅγιον; 3:11 [GI]; 13:13,18 [only GII]), “honourable” (ἐντιμον; 3:11 [GI]); “great” (μέγα; 11:14 [twice GII]; “praised” (εὐλογητόν; 3:11; 11:14), “to praise” (εὐλογεῖν; 12:6; 13:18; 14:8 [only GII]), “to exalt” (ὑμνεῖν; 12:6 [GII]), “to elevate” (ὑψοῦν; 12:6) and “everlasting duration” (εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας; 3:11; 11:14 [GI]; 13:18 [GII]; cf. ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ 14:8 [GII]).

26 Significantly, this ambivalent form is found in LXX of the Old Testament only in Tob 13:7.11 (GI only); 14:15 (GII); Ps 54:20; 83:5; 144:13; Sir 24:33; 36:17; Dan 3:90; 7:18.

Besides this “name” which is used as a substitute for “God” – that is without explicitly mentioning κύριος / θεός – , there is the “king of heaven” as a parallel in Tob 13:13. Among the Biblical books this phrase is only found in Tobit (GII: 1:18; 13:13,17; GI: Tob. 13:9,13) and in other late texts – 3Esd 4:46,58 and 3Macc 2:2 – in addition. The content is that there is only one who may be called king of heaven. That means that he is king of the gods (βασιλεὺς τῶν θεῶν; Deut 9:26; Esth 4:17[18]). GI explains the theologically imprecise formulation “king of heaven” in such a way that it defines its theological position already through the preceding parallel word ὄνομα. The nations do not dwell close to the “holy name”, but close to the “*name of the lord God*”; thereby things are made clear by employing the phrase (ePP²⁷) אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה / τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ²⁹ frequently attested in the Old Testament. Because of the premises inserted by GI “king of heaven” is no longer misunderstood.

2.1.2.4. The LORD as Great King (13:16,18)

Two matching jubilant acclamations to God (13:16,18) form the conclusion of the praise of Jerusalem; again there are significant differences between GII and GI:

GII 13:16: “My soul blesses the *Lord* (τὸν κύριον), the Great King (τὸν βασιλέα τὸν μέγαν)!”.

GI 13:16: “My soul should bless *God* (τὸν θεόν), the Great King (τὸν βασιλέα τὸν μέγαν)!”

GII 13:18: “Blessed should be the God of Israel (ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραηλ)! and the blessed

will bless the holy name (τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ἅγιον) forever and ever (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ ἔτι).”

GI 13:18: “Blessed (εὐλογητός) be the God (ὁ θεός) who exalts all ages (πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας).”

The variations indicate diverging intentions considering content and theology. GII sets κύριος in parallel with βασιλεὺς ὁ μέγας in 13:16. GI, however, changes to θεός. Θεός in 13:18 (GII) is a parallel of ὄνομα τὸ ἅγιον which GI omits. In contrast to the phase of time εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ ἔτι³⁰ GI emphasizes the different aeons or phases of time (πάντας τοὺς

²⁷ All occurrences include an enclitic possessive pronoun.

²⁸ Cf. Exod 20:7; Deut 5:11; 18:7; Jos 9:9; 1Kgs 5:17,19; 8:17,20; 2Kgs 5:11; 1Chr 22:7; 2Chr 2:3; 6:7,10; 33:18; Ps 20:8; Isa 24:15; 48:1; 60:9; Jer 26:16; Joel 2:26; Mic 4:5; 5:3.

²⁹ Cf. Gen 4:26; 21:33; Deut 17:12; 18:7; Jos 9:9; 1Kgs 5:17,19; 8:17,20; 18:24; 1Chr 22:7; 2Chr 2:3; 6:7,10; 33:18; Ps 19:8; Sir 47:18; Mic 4:5; 5:3; Joel 2:26; Isa 48:1; Jer 33:16 and also 3Esd 6:1.

³⁰ Cf. above considering Tob 13,7.

αἰῶνας). In order to keep our argumentation transparent we will now deal separately with GII and GI which meet in the use of the epithet βασιλεὺς ὁ μέγας.

2.1.2.4.1. Tob 13:16,18 in GII

Those who have mourned the strokes of fate Jerusalem suffered may see the joy when she is restored. That is why Tobit feels inwardly *prompted* (ἡ ψυχὴ μου) to praise “the lord, the Great King”. – As was already mentioned “lord” is ambiguous and the apposition “Great King” gives prominence to power. That Hellenistic kings did not understand themselves as ordinary kings is indicated by the following formulation: “Thus says the *Great King* [Nebuchadnezzar], the lord of the whole earth...” (Jdt 2:5)³¹. At the same time this divine potentate is identical with the “*God of Israel*” (Tob 13:18); this emphasizes the theological dimension in a second step. Besides, the never ending glory is stressed.

GI employs the two names of God, first κύριος (13:16) and then θεός (13:18) consciously as it creates an external theological parallelism. Thus this choice of words has a religio-political undertone on the one hand and a confessing one on the other hand. Lord and great king direct attention first towards religious influences which concerned the diasporic community from outside; the latter are implicitly corrected in a Biblical sense. The term “*God of Israel*” refers to God as he reveals himself in the fortunes of the people, in judgement and salvation. By the name – according to the tradition beginning in Deut 12:5ff. and the Shechina-concept developed from it – God cannot only be designated, but “locally” described and be present. Jerusalem is the visible sign of God’s presence.

2.1.2.4.2. Tob 13:16,18 in GI

Instead of κύριος (GII) GI employs θεός in 3:16. Thus the *Great King* taken from the profane sphere is religiously interpreted from the outset. The Biblical author can refer to a psalm where יהוה, in 94:3^{LXX} is translated θεός, he is “a great king (הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל / βασιλεὺς μέγας) above all the gods”. So in the book of Tobit the writer is interested in a univer-

31 The following occurrences of „Great King“ include both profane and theological usage: 2Kgs 18:19; Ezra 5,11; Isa 36:4; Mal 1:14; Ps 46/45:3; 94/95:3; Qoh 9:14; Esth 3:13; 8:12, cf. Ps 2,32.

sally valid theological statement. He keeps to this strategy quite consistently and omits the reference to Israel in the description of God as well as the mentioning of the name which implies religious practice – just compare the pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Tob 1:4,6-8). It is the aim of the description to prove that God is the lord of the “history of the universe”, as He upholds all of its phases (πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας).

2.1.3. God as Father

Even if not so often, God is called father in several passages within the proto-canonical Old Testament. With this term one associates a special devotion as one expects to receive from one's own father viz. forefather. God remains steadfast in his affection even in such situations when the natural bonds would fail. “For you are our father (אֲבִינִי / אֲתָהּ / ἡμῶν εἰ πατήρ), though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our father (אֲבִינִי יְהוָה / אֲתָהּ / σύ κύριε πατήρ ἡμῶν); our Redeemer from of old is your name” (Isa 63:16). The cipher “father”³² implies protection and support even where the term is obviously employed in a figurative sense: “Father of orphans and protector of widows is God” (Ps 68:6). – In the late period in some passages of Old Testament writings the emphasis shifts from helping support to authority and superiority: “A child (בֶּן / υἱός) honors his father (אָב / πατέρα), and servants (עֲבָדִים / δοῦλος) their master (אֲדֹנָיִם / τὸν κύριον). If then I am a father (אָב / πατήρ), where is the honor due me? And if I am a master (אֲדֹנָיִם / κύριος), where is the respect due me? says the LORD of hosts (יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת / κύριος παντοκράτωρ) ...” (Mal 1:6). The title *pantocrator* is introduced into the invocations of prayers, in combination with God and father; cf. Odes 14:12: θεὲ πατήρ παντοκράτωρ.

Tob 13:4 is in line with this. It is said that God has power over life and death (13:2) and that the diaspora opens up the possibility for the Israelites to begin to sing God's praise before the nations (ἐνώπιον τῶν ἐθνῶν). The latter shall see his majestic greatness (μεγαλωσύνη 13:4). The following abounds in principal names of God: “He is our Lord (αὐτὸς ἡμῶν κύριος) and he is our God (αὐτὸς θεὸς ἡμῶν); he is our Father (αὐτὸς πατήρ ἡμῶν) and he is God (αὐτὸς θεός) forever.” – Since the greatness is emphasized before, one will interpret the quotation – as in other passages in the book of Tobit – in terms of a lordly statement of sovereignty. The word *God* is used twice; it implies divine timeless

32 Cf. among other occurrences 1Chr 29:10; Isa 64:7,10; Jer 3:4,19; Mal 2:10; Ps 89:27; 103:13; cf. Dtn 1:31; 8:5; Prov 3:12; Sir 51:10; Wis 14:3.

authority. Therefore “father” probably does not indicate the aspect of God’s provident care, but is rather a paraphrase of his superior position.

2.2. God’s Characteristics

2.2.1. God Is Just and Redeeming

Tobit is ridiculed by the disbelieving members of his tribe and by his unsensible wife because of his indefatigable faith and his conduct showing devotion to God. Feeling disappointed Tobit invokes God in a prayer that he might let him die (Tob 3:6). The introduction of the prayer (3:2) enumerates some aspects of what the Lord/ God is like. The following epithets are enumerated: he is just (δίκαιος)³³, he is ruler and judge³⁴ (κρίνειν), his ways, i.e. “his behaviour”, are mercy (ἐλεημοσύνη³⁵) and reliability (ἀλήθεια). Since God is just he will – in spite of the prayer for death – act according to his will (3:6), which is identical in meaning with what is best for Tobit. Only when one has followed all ups and downs in Tobit’s life, one will recognize that – though we frequently have a contrary impression – God really is “redeeming” in an encompassing sense, and not only with regard to Tobit as an individual. Even if it is used sparingly, δίκαιος runs like a crimson thread through the entire book.

2.2.2. God Is Merciful

As compared with the rest of Old Testament literature it is striking that in Tobit words derived from the root ἐλε*³⁶ are found frequently; ἔλεος, ἐλεήμων, ἐλεεῖν more or less exclusively describe God’s conduct and his ways of behaviour so that they are especially important, whereas the

33 Further occurrences of δίκαιος refer to men and human behaviour; GII 7:6 ἀνὴρ δίκαιος // ποιῶν ἐλεημοσύνας; 9:6 καλὲ καὶ ἀγαθὲ ἀνδρὸς καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ δικαίου καὶ ἐλεημοποιοῦ; 13:15; GI 4:17; 13:10,15; 14:9.

34 GI emphasizes the aspects “just” and “truthful” by explicitly qualifying judgement as “truthful” and “just”: κρίσιν ἀληθινὴν καὶ δικαίαν.

35 The noun ἐλεημοσύνη is used – with the exception of Tob 3:2 – for human behaviour: GII 14:2,8,10; GI 4,7; 14,2; it is explicitly emphasized that God takes notice of these and rescues from death because of such charitable deeds (cf. GII 14,10).

36 The following only takes into account the occurrences in GII.

noun ἐλεημοσύνη – with a few exceptions – designates a generous gift or donation within the human sphere³⁷.

Whoever is in need and can no longer rely on men, may turn to God because He is merciful (ἐλεήμων). God will certainly hear him, as the examples of Sara (3:11) and of the gathering of the dispersed people (13:5) demonstrate. Because God had mercy on Tobias and Sara (ἡλέησας; 8:17) – in the sense of “to care for s.o. protectively” – both their lives had a so far happy ending. The noun ἔλεος in Tobit means “assistance, protection” (8:4) which God grants (ποιεῖν ἔλεος; 8:4,17); therefore it is already related to σωτηρία as well-being/ redemption (6:18; 8:4,17) and εἰρήνη as salvation (7:12). God's help (ὅτι ἡλέησεν; 11:16) is the cause of the healing of the eyes. It is easily understood that men want to see that in the future there will be God's assistance. “Bring ... (the) life to fulfilment in happiness and with *assistance* (μετ' ἐλέου)!” (8:17; cf. 8:7). The basic word נֶסֶח is recalled by the aspect that assistance comes as a great surprise and against any personal expectation (8:16). It is remarkable that one *shall* try to secure divine assistance through prayer (6:18).

2.2.3. God Is Living

Tobit introduces his great hymn (13:1) with the confession that God lives forever (ὁ ζῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). As the unlimited extension of time underlines, the participle is to be interpreted according to Hebrew thinking: at present, as well as in the past and in the future, it is true that God lives. The one who lives provides life and preserves it. Here we come across the explanation why God is acting as he does in the book of Tobit: Tobit and Sara would prefer death to living in their unpleasant situation. Tobias's long journeys, during which he carried a lot of money with him, were extremely risky without military protection. – There is a happy ending and at last there is a gain of insight into the sense of life and a gain of joy of living. – This is true for all protagonists. It shows that the statement that God is living is not only an information about God, but at the same time it explains that he guarantees life, preserves life that is in danger and increases the joy of living.

37 1:3,16; 2:14; 3:2; 7:6; 12:8f; 14:2,8,10f (GII) and in GI 1:3,16; 2:14; 4:7f,10f,16; 12:8f; 14:2,10f; refer to human behaviour; God's acting in a more general way is only mentioned in 3:2 and 13:8 (only GI).

2.3. God's Ways of Acting

Once and for all the focus of actions in the book of Tobit is the Lord. How God reveals himself and how he wants to be understood is shown by the activities which originate with him. The multiple and different examples create a diversified image which is difficult to systematize.

2.3.1. God's Fundamental Care

In his decisions God remains independent of man; he does not allow his will to be influenced (cf. 4:19). This divine constancy does not mean any arbitrariness because it is guided by further purposes.

- Who is praying knows that the Lord will do what is best for the one imploring (τὸ ἀρεστόν ποιεῖν; 1:6), and one may assume that he is accomplishing something beneficial (ἐποίησεν ... ἀγαθά; 12:6).
- Therefore it is in man's interest that God takes notice of him. When God looks at the praying person (ἐπιβλέπειν; 1:3), the answer is close at hand.
- However, God does not shower his devotion on men indiscriminately. Especially where one may almost jump at the fact that pure idealism is the motive for extraordinarily good acting, God becomes mistrustful as can be seen with Tobit. The Lord seems to be surprised by the spontaneity and the radicalism of complying with the commandment to bury the dead, and he sends (ἀποστέλλειν; 12:13) Raphael in order to examine (πειράζειν; 12:13) the sincerity of such actions. One will recall Job 1:7-12, though in Tobit it is God himself who initiates the controlling.
- But this does not imply anything dangerous, since God has mercy (ἐλεεῖν) upon man, and that means that he makes him experience something beneficial (11:16). In God's power there is a chance and possibility of assistance which does not occur at random.
- When one prays to God one can move him to make assistance and redemption (ἔλεος and σωτηρία) develop (γίνεσθαι; 6:18). God does not only have the abstract ability at his disposal to effect (ποιεῖν; 7:12; 8:4,17) protection (ἔλεος) and well-being (σωτηρία).
- In actual situations God's ability proves to be effective. – Although, or rather just because God resides in heaven, he is able to observe the persons who are travelling to a distant region and to rescue (διασώζειν; 5:17) them from all imaginable dangers, so that the blind father who stayed at home did not have to worry, but

could be sure that his travelling son would return safe and sound (ἀποκαθιστάνειν ὑγιαίνων; 5:17).

- Man is not able to take his own life in his hand independently from God and to make everything turn out well. Therefore, Raguel prays, that God might lead the lives of the newly-wed couple to a happy ending (συντελεῖν τὴν ζωὴν; 8:17).

2.3.2. God's helpful Presence in Imminent Danger

From the material collected so far it is clear that one's destiny firmly remains in God's hand, even the entire life is guided and accompanied by God.

- God grants guidance and redemption in difficult situations: As already seven bridegrooms have died in their respective wedding night, Raguel is afraid, that the series of misfortunes will go on. His wish that the young couple Sara and Tobias may be protected by the lord during the night (εὐδοῶσει; 7:12), is filled with fear and doubts, since Raguel obviously is not confident (any more), that the lord will actually intervene protectively. The meaning of the root which is inherent in the word εὐδοῶν [εὐ + ὁδός / good way (of life)] is realized when God assists (εὐδοῶσαι; 7:13; 10:11) protectively (εἰρήνην).
- Man who is left to himself is not unable to cope with the manifold dangers ; therefore God sends messengers, that is angels, at a time he has chosen and to the right place (ἀποστέλλειν; 3:17; 12:13,14,20).
- Also with a helping angel it is the lord himself who takes, for instance, the travellers safely home (ἀποκαθιστάνειν; 10:13).
- God brings those persons together who are destined for one another. Because of this Tobit can praise God that he has brought his daughter-in-law to him (ἄγειν; 11:17).

2.3.3. Special Spheres of God's Acting

God accompanies the entire life and correspondingly his "actions" are manifold. Two different poles are to be mentioned: (1) On the one hand God bestows something good on man, (2) on the other hand he restores order when there is a state of disaster.

2.3.3.1. God's actions are always good; different spheres can be described here.

- God does not set up an account, but he gives (διδόναι). He gives different things.

God gives what we need for living (ζῆν; 5:20). And in order to use it well we need good ideas (βουλὴν ἀγαθήν; 4:19), which are also inspired by him. One of God's gifts is joy (χαράν; 7:17).

- For living successfully and "salvation-historically" relevant are χάρις, ἔλεος, εἰρήνην and εὐλογία. – Out of conviction and not self-interestly Tobit observes those rules, which were unrenounceable in the diaspora. God reacts to this by advancing Tobit's political career, which Tobit interprets as graceful gift (δίδωμι χάριν; 1:12). God gives his protection and welfare (ἔλεος und εἰρήνην; 7:12³⁸), so that evil powers have no effect.

God gives his blessing (εὐλογίαν; 9:6).

- When Tobit has run into trouble he turns to the lord; his first prayer is that the lord might think of him (κύριος μνησόμεσθαι; 1:3). This includes that the lord hears his prayer and will find a solution for the difficult situation.

- God expects that one turns to him in prayer. One cannot force an answer from God, but hope is justified that God will hear the prayer (εἰσηκούσθῃ ἡ προσευχή; 3:16; cf. 12:12).

2.3.3.2. The book of Tobit describes that Tobit, who is distinguished by an extremely exemplary way of living, finds himself in serious trouble.

- By his prayer Tobit tries to induce the lord to release (ἀπολύειν; 1:6) him of his affliction (ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνάγκης; 1:6). As the trouble is so extreme it would appear to be a release for him if God lets him die (3:13).

- Raphael explains to the blind and helpless Tobit, that God will heal him (ιάσασθαι; 5:10; cf. Exod 15,26), if he will rely on God exclusively. Thus he confirms the purpose of his commission (3:17; 12:14) and explains his name unintentionally.

- Not only individual persons, the entire people then experience with his own assistance God's re-turning (ἐπιστρέφειν; 13:6) to them, when they have submitted to God beforehand.

38 The death-bringing activity of Ασμοδαῖος τὸ δαιμόνιον τὸ ποιηρόν, is meant; though he does not let the married couple live, he makes the success of God's plan possible in this destructive manner; for this difficult figure cf. Owens, Asmodeus (in the present volume); Ego, "Denn er liebt sie"; Ego, Variants.

2.3.4. God's Reaction to offence

God is not a toy for man. When men become guilty of different trespasses or even crimes God reacts in a rejecting and even angry way.

2.3.4.1. God Punishes

The Biblical author says with different verbs how God directs his activity against those who have committed an offence.

- The Lord is the sovereign of human life; he may lift up, but he may as well let fall into fathomless depths, metaphorically speaking "cast down to the bottom of Hades" (ταπεινώνει; 4:19).
- When Tobit turns to the Lord in prayer he becomes conscious of his sinfulness and asks not to be punished (μή με ἐκδικήσης; 1:3) for it.
- When Tobit describes his blindness and the misfortune connected with it with the verb μαστιγοῦν (11:14), he cannot mean "flogging"; instead he uses a modified meaning of the word saying that calamity befell him which was inflicted by God. But God punishes (μαστιγοῦν; 13:2,5) misdeeds (ἁδικίαι) and this may lead up to the exile.

2.3.4.2. God Who Disperses the People

- Without any reference to the political-military power of other nations it is said that it is exclusively in God's power to disperse the people (διασπείρειν; 13:3); this also implies that he can gather it again when the presuppositions for doing so are given.

2.3.4.3. God Leads into Death

Most impressively God's sphere of influence is revealed when he disposes of life and death. In varying forms the author talks about this in the book of Tobit.

- God leads into the experience of the borderline of death. The dispersion exposed the people to such a hopelessness that they felt the breath of the underworld (κατάγειν ἕως ᾗδου ᾗδης) and were no longer sure whether God was willing to preserve the existence of his people. After being rescued from dire distress they recognized God's power as he could lead into the nearness of death and could

as well rescue them from the experience of destruction (ἀνάγειν ἐκ τῆς ἀπωλείας τῆς μεγάλης; 13:2).

- To take away the spirit is a paraphrase of God's power to cause death (ἀναλαβεῖν τὸ πνεῦμα; 1:6)
- In hopeless despair Sara prays that the Lord would bring about her death viz. would let her die (ἀποθνήσκειν; 1:10; ἀποκτείνειν; 3:15). Words like these attribute the right to dispose of death, to God.

2.4. Ways of Acting before God

We have noted several times that God reacts to man's behaviour with assent or rejection. For this reason the ways of acting which are related to God are especially relevant for understanding the concept of God in the book of Tobit.

2.4.1. Attitude towards God

The first level is one's attitude towards God because this is the basis for any concrete activity.

- What is constantly before one's eyes, determines one's life. It is Tobit's first advice to remember the Lord (μνημονεύειν τοῦ κυρίου; 4:5).
- As a blind man Tobit describes himself as someone buried alive who cannot help his son. Raphael comforts him by indicating that he may reckon with God's assistance if he will rely on God exclusively (θάρασει ἐγγὺς παρὰ τῷ θεῷ; 5:10).
- To feel content with what one has is a central virtue. Who strives for it avoids risky undertakings. Sara worries about her son who is going to travel, and she emphasizes that she does not need that money, as she is satisfied with what she has (ικανὸν εἶναι; 5:28). In any case, God gives what is necessary for living.
- It is striking that in a rather extensive book which deals throughout with decisive events in life and where God is permanently involved, the subject "respect for God/ fear of God" is only mentioned once. It is not decisive that one is poor. There are more important virtues; according to 4:21 respect for God (φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεόν) is the most prominent. This respect is not so much taken as a task, but as an individual decision in favour of God.

2.4.2. Active and Practical Worship of God

Of course, practical behaviour reflects one's attitude towards God. This holds true no matter whether one does something (1) negative or (2) positive. The effect on one's relation to God, however, is contrary.

2.4.2.1. Offence against God

- Without putting it precisely, generally everything which might be wrong in relation to the Lord/ God as well as any flirting with sinning (ἁμαρτεῖν; 4:5) is rejected. Who has to stand on trial before God, the judge (3:2), becomes aware of his faultiness. When he begs for his assistance, the sins (ἁμαρτίαι) and offences (ἀγνοήματα; 3:4) become evident before God answers; that is why the person praying asks for indulgence. About sin one reads in Gen 4:7, that it is lurking at the entrance of the heart like a beast of prey. A similar idea is found in Tobit as well: This "active" element of sin is connected with individual assent, so that the offence is regarded as a misdeed committed on purpose; however, one can avoid it deliberately ("run away" φεύγειν; 4:21 [as from danger]). What terrible consequences sin (ἁμαρτία) and injustice (ἀδικία) have, is indicated by the dispersion of the people on the one hand (14:7) and by the parallelization with death on the other (θάνατος; 12:9).
- If one violates the Lord's commandments (παραβαίνειν τὰς ἐντολάς; 4:5), one will commit an offence, if one does not make use of the opportunity to trespass against the commandments, one will do something good.

2.4.2.2. Right Behaviour before God

- In general – without being able to say in what such actions consist – it is true that not wealth gives life its sense, but to do good (ποιεῖν τὰ ἀγαθὰ; 4:21) before the Lord God (κύριος ὁ θεός).
- How to serve God (δουλεύειν) is described with regard to three spheres 14:8: (a) To do whatever pleases God, to bear him in mind persistently, and to praise him always. (b) In the personal sphere to strive for a righteous behaviour and (c) to help one's fellow-men by giving alms.
- When the people re-turn (ἐπιστρέφειν; 13:6) to God with genuine and deep conviction (ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ καρδίᾳ) and with real passion (ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ), God will react with grace.
- One of man's destination is to pronounce in public the message of God's acting. With great emphasis Raphael stresses that it is the pri-

mary task to proclaim God's deeds (τὰ ἔργα) in public (ἀνακαλύπτειν καὶ ἐξομολογεῖσθαι; 12:7,11).

• In the book of Tobit the praise of God is unrivalled. To praise God is central point and climax in one's relations with God; several terms are used for this³⁹, we can only indicate a few aspects of the numerous occurrences. The praise of God which functions as a kind of spontaneous basic tribute (cf. 11:14,16; 12:17,18,20; 13:1), is expressed as a kind of joyful thanks giving because having experienced God's assistance. Tobias praises God (εὐλογεῖν τῷ κυρίῳ; 10:14; 11:15), because he let him finish the journey to a distant country successfully. Raphael demands to praise God because of all the good (ἀγαθά; 12:6) and for his great deeds (τὰ ἔργα und τὰ μεγάλα; 12:22).

2.4.3. Prayer

More often than it is explicitly said one finds concrete prayer in the book. In addition there are several hints, which allude to the fact that praying in itself plays an important role with regard to the relation with God.

- Even when father and mother do not help any more and the situation seems hopeless one may turn to God trustingly and ask him for help (δέεσθαι τοῦ κυρίου; 3:10; 6:18).
- Raphael recommends to pray to God (προσεύχεσθαι; 6:18).

3. Raphael's Speaking about God in the Overall Theological Concept of the Book of Tobit

The above investigation mentioned Raphael time and again. Therefore it is evident that themes are connected with him which can be tied up with the entire complex of theological statements in the book of Tobit. This may evoke the impression that there are no special characteristics.

In Chapter 12⁴⁰, as in other passages (cf. e.g. 13:3) as well, Raphael invites Tobit, for instance, to praise God. Nevertheless, here a difference begins to appear: all individual persons as well as Israelites, who praise the Lord, have a reason of their own why they start to sing the

39 Cf. e.g. the following key-words in GII εὐλογεῖν (in 3:11; 8:5,15; 9:6; 10:14; 11:14ff; 12:6,17f,20,22; 13:7,15f,18; 14:2,6,8,15), εὐλογία (5:17; 7:6; 8:15; 9:6; 11:17), εὐλογητός (3:11; 8:5,15ff; 9:6; 11:14,17; 13:2,14,18), ἀγαλλίαμα (13:13,18), ἐξομολογεῖν (11:16; 12:6f,20,22; 13:3,7,17; 14:2), ὑμνεῖν (12:6:18:22) und ὕψου (13:4:7).

40 Cf. Ego, Figure.

song of praise. In Raphael's words this becomes a general invitation, so to speak a generally applicable universal basic task: "Bless God (τὸν θεόν) and acknowledge him in the presence of all the living for the good things he has done for you. Bless and sing praise to his name. With fitting honor declare to all people the deeds of God. Do not be slow to acknowledge him." (12:6). So Raphael is God's herald, who interprets the experiences individual persons viz. the entire people have had (ἃ ἐποίησεν μεθ' ὑμῶν ἀγαθὰ) as a joyful message for all living beings (ἐνώπιον πάντων τῶν ζώντων)⁴¹.

The difference is even more prominent in the following spheres: information, which is the basis for God's activity, is communicated only by Raphael. He is the one whom God explicitly sends for such a purpose (3:17; 12:13f,20); in the book of Tobit it is only said with regard to prophets in such a general way that God has sent them (14:4). Raphael is the one who examines (περιάζειν; cf. 2.3.1. above), whether human behaviour is true and sincere. It is one of his functions to bring prayers before God (12,12).

For understanding the figure of Raphael the verb ἰᾶσθαι is decisive. It is worthwhile to note that it occurs three times (3:17; 5:10; 12:14) and that it indicates divine acting. It is connected exclusively with Raphael and his commission. Thus it is Raphael's special mission to promise healing viz. to heal himself; in this very context it becomes clear that it is God who is at work.

Raphael's theology: God accompanies life, he effects welfare, and he especially heals humans from outward and inward infirmity. Raphael is the personified message of salvation (soteriology).

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41 Insofar identical phrases are accentuated differently

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